



## Effects of Some Developmental Theories on Improving Primary School Students' Educational Drop

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**ABSTRACT:** Nowadays, one of the major challenges of educational sciences is to improve students' educational drop. In many subjects, the drop occurs due to education administrators' lack of attention to development categories at different levels and ages. Although development includes the whole systematic evolutions in the individual's psychological life, in an applied and educational concept, it is also possible to include a value judgment in the definition. Especially, those evolutions leading to assimilating, organized, effective, and complex behaviors are called development. Based on the table of relationships between development theories and educational drop factors, it seems that there are close relationships between these two issues. Educational drop experts' attention to development theories and their prominent indices can considerably improve educational drop.

**Keywords:** Development theory, educational drop, primary school students, cognitive aspect, emotional-social aspect

### INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, one of the major challenges of educational sciences is to improve students' educational drop. At the same time, educational drop is an extensive issue in educational sciences field. It is affected by several factors yet affects on a variety of subjects. Among the main factors influencing educational drop are various development theories.

Children are valuable capitals constructing society's future. Education in childhood - when personality forms, various habits emerge, and problems can be prevented - constructs individual's and society's future and determines a country's movement path. Paying attention to children's problems and issues leads to society's development and advance. On the other hand, neglecting their problems will give rise to irreversible damages. Hence, primary education investment and planning are among authorities' and officials' most critical duties. Then, they must be specifically prioritized<sup>1</sup>.

Various governments and societies consider education to be a necessity for decreasing global poverty and increasing equality, peace, and stability level for all people<sup>2</sup>.

Like many other developing or developed countries, Iran's education system faces with educational drop issue. This results in a significant loss of human and financial resources. The improvement of educational systems remarkably depends on preventing from loss or reducing educational drop<sup>3</sup>.

Preventing from educational drop and its consequent mental damages is necessary. However, with respect to empirical and theoretical results, educational drop has a complicated and gradual trend<sup>2</sup>. In many subjects, the drop occurs due to education administrators' lack of attention to development categories at different levels and ages. We all have images of development nature. For instance, we

generally suppose that we control children's development. That is children will be the same thing we make of them. We think that it is our duty to teach them, correct their mistakes, provide good patterns for them, and stimulate their learning motivation. This perspective is to some extent logical. Many psychologists including those known as "followers of learning hypotheses" and also many others have the same view. Although psychologists employ a more scientific language, they also think that parents, teachers, and other people organize a child's thinking and behavior. When they see the child's new behavior, they first guess that he has learnt this from another person<sup>4</sup>.

Developmental psychology views can be divided into three main classes: cognitive theories, psychological theories, and learning theories. In other theories, despite all possible differences between them, they are either among these three or merely study development aspects<sup>5</sup>.

The main objective of this study is to find out a natural pattern for children and adolescents' life. From there, we also seek for figuring out our duties and responsibilities when any deviation occurs from this natural pattern. Children and adolescents' natural development pattern follows certain rules and principles in different age stages (*ibid*).

Accordingly, this article seeks for extracting and explaining various effects of some development theories on improving educational drop. This study also intends to achieve results which can be applied in educational sciences field for students with educational drop from the view of developmental theories.

### **Concept and Factors Affecting Educational Drop**

One of various definitions for educational drop includes: early drop-out and repetition of educational basis in the education system of a country<sup>6</sup>.

In his thesis, Pouladi (1996) determines totally ten factors (%47 total variance) of educational drop including:

1. Issues related to curriculum
2. Familial and health problems
3. Environmental-institutional problems
4. Developmental; problems
5. Social-behavioral problems
6. Examination problems
7. Course books problems
8. Instructional problems
9. General problems
10. Familial conflicts<sup>2</sup>.

### **Concept of Development**

Although development includes the whole systematic evolutions in the individual's psychological life, in an applied and educational concept, it is also possible to include a value judgment in the definition. Especially, those evolutions leading to assimilating, organized, effective, and complex behaviors are called development. In this concept, development firstly has a kind of regular and rational progress. Secondly, it occurs gradually and periodically. It is rare to observe a very rapid evolution in an individual. Thirdly, it is accompanied with personal differences emanating from the interaction between heredity and environment. Fourthly, various aspects of the individual's development (cognitive, lingual, emotional, social, and personality) are extensively changeable. And, finally, parents, instructor, teacher, advisor, psychologist, and or another expert's intervention and help can expand development. Hence, development psychology is not a basic knowledge per se. Rather, it is an applied educational knowledge<sup>7</sup>.

Development is a set of quantitative, qualitative, physical, and mental changes emerging during human's life<sup>8</sup>.

### **Some Development Theories**

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### - **John Locke's Environmentalism Theory**

Self-control is the main objective of education. As Locke puts it, "In my opinion, it is obvious that the basis for all virtues and perfections lies in this force that we can stop satisfying our needs. These are degrees on which logic cannot dominate." To suggest self-regulation, first, a child's physical health must be met. When patient's body is weak, a person is not so much capable of controlling its needs<sup>4</sup>. According to many scientists, first in his works regarding children education, John Locke has first considered children's mind as blank slates nurtured the same as any method it faces. Yet, after a while, Locke slightly withdrew from his opinion:

He explains that children are not blank slates. As various teachers have pointed that Locke do not pay so much attention to the extent of heterogeneity in his ideas. If he had an awareness and insight unharmonious with his basic environmentalism, this heterogeneity did not concern him (*ibid*).

In a general conclusion, we take Locke's theory on children as children's training based on the type of environment.

### - **Jean Piaget's Cognitive Development Theory**

As one of the pioneers in the field of developmental psychology, Jean Piaget whose cognitive development theory has been mainly resulted from a case study on his three daughters has divided children's life cycle into four stages:

Various development stages based on language development (sign making readiness), thought development (egotism status), and child's age are summarized in the following table:

cognitive period	language development (sign making readiness)	thought development (egotism status)
<b>sensory-motor period (0-2 years old)</b>	not appeared yet	weak distinction between physical ego and surrounding environment
<b>pre-operational period (2-6 years old)</b>	signal functions development; child learns signs and uses them to describe facts	weak distinction between objective and subjective, sign and subject of sign, his own and others' ideas, various aspects of reality
<b>objective operation period (7-11 years old)</b>	child learns to read, write, do math, classify and solve logical problems with objective and physical content using signs	weak distinction between objective and subjective, thought and subject of thought, commenting on reality and real condition
<b>nominal operation period (12-adulthood)</b>	adolescent can use signs in logical and theoretical methods and can use mental constructs in the absence of real affairs	weak discernment of this issue that everything is possible in mind yet not in reality

(Seif et al, 2000)

In a general conclusion, we take Piaget's theory on children as based on language and mind development which as the child gets older, thinking gets more abstract and less evident.

### - **Lawrence Kohlberg's Moral Development Theory**

Kohlberg's theory views development from the perspective of morality and in particular moral judgment. He considers three levels and six stages for his theory. Stages 1 and 2 cover the first level (), stages 3 and 4 the second level (), and stages 5 and 6 the third level ().

Like Piaget, he believes that his sequence appears without any changes. Children always go from stage 1 to stage 2 and stage 3 etc. they do not skip some stages and (or) do not pass through a mixed sequence of them. All children do not achieve the highest stages. Yet, they move forward in these stages to some extent based on their training<sup>4</sup>.

Kohlberg's moral development stages include:

Stage 1: In this stage, children think that they must obey the source and reference of power without any questions; otherwise, they will be penalized.

Stage 2: Here, children are not affected by a single source of power. They see that there are different aspects in each case. Since everything is personal in a person's view, the individual is free to make hedonistic decision (i.e. based on his desires).

Stages 3 and 4: In these stages, adolescent judges behaviors and incidences with respect to conventional society. In stage 3, children suppose that good members of society approve his behavior to the extent that his motivations are pure and honest. In stage 4, the main attention is to comply with rule for social order.

Stages 5 and 6: In these stages, the person considers rules and principles which may be beyond community's values and its need to order. In stage 5, responder implies a brief knowledge of personal values which may be prior to rule. Yet, in stage 6, the person thinks about values such as abstract, universal and general principles (*ibid*).

- **Jerome Bruner's Development Theory**

Structurally, Bruner's theory is so similar to Piaget's theory. He himself notes this (where he compares his theory to Piaget's theory). The distinctive feature and focus of his theory is the effect of environment on child's development.

In short, Burner's development stages are:

1. Practical cognition stage: In this stage, intelligence is completely practical. Child's learning is non-verbal and occurs by working with objects.
2. Visual cognition stage: Among the main characteristics of this stage include beginning to learn language which gives new ability to the child. Since then, child can mentally use what he did before in practical and sensory-motor terms.
3. Symbolic cognition stage: In this stage, independent images appear in the child's mind. Now, he does not need those tangible visual imaginations<sup>5</sup>.

Based on Bruner's beliefs, a rich environment can help the child to gain mental maintenance faster and in lower stages. To realize this, language is a support leading the child to overcome his dependence on visual perceptions earlier (*ibid*).

- **Erik Hamburger Ericsson's Developmental Theory**

Unlike Piaget's theory which emphasizes cognitive development, Ericsson highlights emotional and social development aspects. Perhaps, we can consider Piaget's cognitive development theory and Ericsson's emotional and social development theory as complement. This is because each of them has studied and investigated an important aspect of psychology (*ibid*).

Stages of Ericsson's developmental theory include:

1. From 0 to 1 years old: Feeling of security and trust versus feeling of insecurity and distrust
2. From 1 to 3 years old: Relying on oneself versus shyness and uncertainty
3. From 3 to 5 years old: Innovation versus feeling guilty
4. From 6 to 11 years old: Efficiency versus disdain
5. From 12 to 18 years old: Feeling of identity versus anonymity
6. From 19 to 35 years old: Intimacy versus loneliness
7. From 35 to 60 years old: Fertility versus infertility
8. From 60 on: Ego's perfection versus suppression

**Relationships between Development Theories and Educational Drop Grounds**

In this section, we will discuss the effects of development theories on improving primary school students' educational drop. Following table describes the relationship between each theory and ten factors of educational drop actualization:

developmental theories	prominent aspects of theory	relationship with educational drop factors
Locke's developmental theories	intensive environmentalism	familial and health problems environmental-institutional problems familial conflicts

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	maintaining child's happiness and protecting him against diseases	familial and health problems
<b>Piaget's developmental theory</b>	intellectual development; movement of thoughts from objects to abstracts	problems concerning curriculum examination problems course book problems instructional problems
	language development; moving from elementary signs to logical functions	problems concerning curriculum examination problems course book problems instructional problems
<b>Kohlberg's developmental theory</b>	moralism influenced by source of power	environmental-institutional problems
	using morality based on hedonism	-----
	moralism based on conventional behaviors in society	environmental-institutional problems social-behavioral problems general problems
	moralism based on values beyond community	social-behavioral problems general problems
<b>Bruner's developmental theory</b>	rich environment and movement of thought from objects to abstracts	familial and health problems environmental-institutional problems social-behavioral problems instructional problems familial conflicts
<b>Ericsson's developmental theory</b>	emotional development; from security and trust to the perfection of ego	familial and health problems familial problems
	social development; from security and trust to the perfection of ego	social-behavioral problems general problems

### CONCLUSION

Based on the above table, it seems that there are close relationship between these two issues. Hence, educational drop experts' attention to development theories and their prominent indices can considerably improve educational drop.

As seen in the table, the strongest relationship exists between development theories and educational drop in the meeting points of three sources: society, family, and institution.

Again, based on the table, there is no relationship between educational drop factors and only one of the prominent indices of Kohlberg's developmental theory. It is beyond the scope of this paper.

Regarding the table of relationships between development theories and educational drop factors:

- Cognitive aspects of development are further trained in institutional environment.
- Emotional aspects of development further flourish at home.
- Social aspects of development are further nurtured in society and institutional environment.

Each source's (i.e. society, family, and institution (school)) awareness of the aspects they control can further pave the way for relieving from educational drop among primary school students.

Based on what is discussed above and to improve educational drop among primary school students, following strategies are presented:

1. In the formulation of objectives and also the structure of the content of courses, primary school curriculum designers must employ experts in various fields. To do so, they must seek for society, family, and school experts' help.
2. Scholars of learning field must make attempt to explain the instructional objectives of curriculum based on the cognitive aspects of development.
3. Educational sociologists whose achievements play a major role in socializing students must make attempt to direct primary school students' social development aspects in a proper and scientific path by including social objectives in primary school curriculum.
4. Family experts must make attempt to present applied and tangible instructions to families in order to prevent from emotional problems and finally educational drop issues.
5. Teachers, instructors, and education administrators must be adequately accurate in extracting developmental problems and obstacles among primary school students.
6. Researchers of development theories must make attempt to provide teachers and educational administrators with more qualities of developmental aspects in rational and tangible terms.

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